

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating comprising:

receiving a text message from a user of a source set top box;

transmitting [[a]] the text message from [[a]] the source set top box to an exchange;

packetizing at the exchange said text message into a plurality of data packets, wherein said plurality of data packets include said text message, an identifier of said source set top box, an identifier of a destination set top box, and a packet header information;

forwarding said plurality of data packets to a multiplexor;

multiplexing said plurality of data packets and audio data and video data into an output transport stream; and

broadcasting said output transport stream to the destination set top box.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning a reserved program identifier to the data packets, and wherein the output transport stream is an MPEG-2 format.

~~packetizing at the exchange said text message into a plurality of data packets, wherein said plurality of data packets include said text message, an identifier of said source set top box, an identifier of a destination set top box, and a packet header information; and~~

~~forwarding said plurality of data packets to a multiplexor.~~

3. (Currently Amended)The method of claim 2, further comprising at the destination set top box:

receiving the output transport stream at the destination set top box;

comparing the reserved program identifier to an identifier of the destination set top box; and

responsive to the comparison, displaying the text message.

~~multiplexing said plurality of data packets and audio data and video data into an output transport stream; and~~

~~broadcasting said output transport stream to the destination set top box.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further including the step of demultiplexing the data packets, audio data and video data from the transport stream wherein said plurality of data packets are in MPEG-2 format.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising:
receiving said broadcasted, output transport stream at said destination set top box.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said transmitting is done via telephone or cable.

7. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said broadcasting is done via satellite, cable, or wireless.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said receiving is done via satellite, cable, or wireless.

9. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
demultiplexing said broadcasted, output transport stream at said destination set top box into said text message.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating comprising:
receiving a text message from a source set top box;
packetizing said text message into a plurality of data packets, wherein said plurality of data packets include said text message, an identifier of a destination set top box, an identifier of said source set top box, and a packet header information; and
forwarding said plurality of data packets to multiplexor that produces a transport stream containing the data packets, audio data and video data.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, further including the step of

receiving another text message from another source set top box and wherein the plurality of data packets includes the another text message, an identifier of another destination set top box and an identifier of the another source set top box ~~said plurality of data packets are packetized into a MPEG-2 format.~~

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said receiving is via telephone.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said receiving is via cable.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating comprising:

receiving a plurality of text messages, wherein said plurality of text messages originated at a plurality of source set top boxes;

packetizing said plurality of text messages into a plurality of data packets; multiplexing said plurality of data packets, destination set top box identifiers, and audio data and video data into an output transport stream; and

broadcasting said output transport stream to a plurality of destination set top boxes.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein said plurality of text messages are received via telephone or cable and wherein the output transport stream is an MPEG-2 format.

16. (Original) The method claim 14, wherein said broadcasting is via satellite, wireless, or cable.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

demultiplexing said broadcasted, output transport stream at said plurality of destination set top boxes into said plurality of text messages.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating comprising:

receiving a broadcasted, output transport stream including a plurality of data packets on a destination set top box;

responsive to a destination set top box identifier contained in the output transport stream, demultiplexing said broadcasted, output transport stream at said destination set top box into a text message, wherein said text message originated on a source, set top box.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said receiving is via satellite, cable, or wireless and where the output transport stream is an MPEG-2 format.

20. (Currently Amended) A system for communicating comprising:

a service station adapted to receive a plurality of text messages sent from a plurality of source set top boxes, wherein said service station packetizes said plurality of text messages into a plurality of data packets;

a multiplexor in communication with said service station adapted to multiplex said plurality of data packets, destination set top box identifiers, and audio data and video data into an output transport stream; and

broadcasting means for broadcasting said output transport stream to a plurality of destination set top boxes.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, wherein said broadcasting means is a satellite and wherein the output transport stream is an MPEG-2 format.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said broadcasting means is cable.

23. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said broadcasting means is wireless means.

24. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said plurality of text messages received by said service station sent from said plurality of source set top boxes are received via telephone or cable.

25. (Original) The system of claim 20, further comprising:
a source set top box connected via communication means with said service station.
26. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein said communication means is telephone or cable.
27. (Original) The system of claim 20, further comprising:
a destination set top box in communication with said broadcasting means.
28. (Original) The system of claim 27, wherein said destination set top box is in communication via satellite, cable, or wireless.
29. (Original) A communication system comprising:
transmitting means for transmitting a text message from a source set top box to a packetizing means;
packetizing means for packetizing said text message into a plurality of data packets, wherein said plurality of data packets include said text message, an identifier of said source set top box, and identifier of a destination set top box, and a packet header information;
multiplexing means in communication with said packetizing means for multiplexing said plurality of data packets and audio data and video data into an output transport stream; and
broadcasting means in communication with said multiplexing means for broadcasting said output transport stream to a destination set top box.
30. (Currently Amended) The communication system of claim 29, wherein said transmitting is done via telephone or cable and wherein the output transport stream is an MPEG-2 format.

31. (Original) The communication system of claim 29, wherein said broadcasting is done via satellite, cable, or wireless.